

**Delta Stewardship Council  
Risk Reduction and Coequal Goals Work Group Initial Meeting  
9 a.m. to 12 p.m., Thursday, June 8, 2010  
Delta Room, 650 Capitol Mall  
Sacramento, CA**

**DRAFT MEETING SUMMARY for DELTA STEWARDSHIP COUNCIL**

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*This document summarizes input provided by participants during the July 8 meeting of the Risk Reduction and Coequal Goals Work Group. The summary is intended to quickly inform Council members about (1) who participated, (2) points raised by participants in response to the meeting charge questions, and (3) preliminary themes or topics of emphasis identified by staff. It is intended to supplement other forms of direct input to the Council, including written submissions and comment at Council meetings. This summary is not intended to serve as a meeting transcript; in some cases the order of comments has been modified for efficiency and organization while preserving meaning. It will be made available to the public as well as the Council.*

**Attendees:**

|                     |   |
|---------------------|---|
| R.G. Albright       | California Business, Transportation and Housing Agency            |
| Ron Baldwin         | San Joaquin County OES  |
| Bill Betchart       | CH2M Hill consultant  |
| Taylor Blackburn    | Ogilvy Public Relations   |
| Cheryl Bly-Chester  | Center for Catastrophic Risk Management – UC Berkeley             |
| Dave Breniwer       | Placer County Water Agency and Recreational Boaters of California |
| Gwendolyn Buchholz  | CH2M Hill   |
| Brian Campbell      | East Bay Municipal Utility District                               |
| Dennis Clark        | U.S. Army Corps of Engineers                                      |
| Sydney Coatsworth   | Ascent Environmental Inc.   |
| Gilbert Cosio       | MBK   |
| Bill Darsie         | KSN   |
| Lara Delaney        | Contra Costa County   |
| Connie Ford         | Sacramento County Water Agency                                    |
| Dave Forkel         | Delta Wetlands  |
| Justin Frederickson | California Farm Bureau Federation                                 |
| Jim Goodwin         | U.S. Bureau of Reclamation  |
| Les Harder          | HDR   |
| Phil Harrington     | City of Antioch   |
| Mike Harty          | Kearns & West (Facilitator)                                       |
| Scott Huntsman      | Shaw Group  |
| Dan Kelly           | Glen Colusa Irrigation District                                   |
| Rich Kranz          | California Department of Water Resources                          |
| Christopher Lee     | County of Yolo  |
| Christine Lim       | Kearns & West   |

Summary – Delta Stewardship Council Risk Reduction and Coequal Goals Work Group

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|--------------------|---|
| Patricia McBroom   | Independent journalist  |
| Terry Macaulay     | Delta Stewardship Council   |
| Veery Maxwell      | Senator Lois Wolk   |
| Paul Moore         | Caltrains   |
| Robert Morrow      | ARCADIS   |
| Eric Nichol        | Delta Stewardship Council   |
| John Oldenburger   | Propex  |
| Steve Ottemoeller  | Friant Water Authority  |
| Mark Pruner        | North Delta CARES   |
| Robert Pyke        | ARCADIS   |
| Veronica Rodriguez | Ogilvy Public Relations   |
| Spreck Rosekrans   | Environmental Defense Fund  |
| Brooke Schlenker   | U.S. Army Corps of Engineers  |
| Curt Schmutte      | State and Federal Contractors Water Agency  |
| Kurt Schuparra     | California Strategies   |
| Wayne Smith        | U.S. Army Corps of Engineers  |
| Melinda Terry      | California Central Valley Flood Control Association <i>and</i> North Delta Water Agency |
| Jane Wagner-Tyack  | Restore the Delta   |
| Peter Wijsman      | ARCADIS   |
| Tom Zuckerman      | Central Delta Water Agency  |

## I. Meeting Purpose and Participation

The Council previously authorized creation of four work groups open to the public to assist the Council in developing the Interim Plan and Delta Plan. The four work groups are:

- Risk Reduction and Coequal Goals
- Governance and Implementation
- Reduced Reliance on the Delta
- Outreach

As currently envisioned, the agenda for each work group meeting will focus on a set of questions approved by Council staff that link to issues on which the Council seeks input.

The initial meeting of the Risk Reduction and Coequal Goals work group was held from 9 a.m. to 12 p.m. on July 8, 2010. The charge for this work group meeting was posted on the Council web page in advance of the meeting. The charge and agenda for the meeting are attached as Appendix A. A PowerPoint presentation providing an overview of the work group purpose and format, along with the eight charge questions, is attached as Appendix B. This Power Point will be posted on the Council web site. The entire meeting was videotaped in order to promote transparency. The video also will be posted on the Council website.

Approximately 40 members of the public participated in the work group meeting. Names appearing on the sign-in sheet are included at the top of this summary.

## II. Work Group Feedback on Risk Reduction and Coequal Goals

The meeting focused on risk reduction for the Interim Plan, and the work group was asked to provide input on eight questions organized in three categories: levee risks, preparedness, and land use. In some cases participants responded to these questions; in others, participants offered their own questions for consideration by the Council. Both responses and questions are summarized here. In addition, Council staff has identified preliminary themes and points of emphasis in each category based on public input at the meeting. These themes are provided here at the end of each category, following the summary of responses.

### Category 1: Levee Risks

1. *What and where are the most significant short-term and medium-term levee risks in the Delta?*
  - It is important to clarify what is meant by short-term and medium-term levee risks. As an example, one proposed way of thinking about this is that the short-term covers a 10-year period, and the medium-term covers a 10-30 year period.
  - The Council should evaluate what it can practically accomplish regarding levee risk during the period when it is developing the Interim and Delta Plans.<sup>1</sup>
  - The Delta is a system, and levee risk must have this focus; one levee or a few should not become the focus independent of their role in the entire system. We don't fully understand risks to the system of individual levees going down, including environmental risks. We should investigate these unknowns. Don't assume that if a levee goes down that it shouldn't be reclaimed.
  - In answering this question focus on existing programs and entities that have been working on these issues. Avoid creating a whole new structure or process that either duplicates past efforts or fails to utilize all the work that has been done. There is a chart that shows the success of existing levee programs that should be brought to the attention of the Council. We can quantify the disasters that have been averted since 1985.
2. *How should the state prioritize these risks?*
  - There is a basic issue that needs to be addressed when setting risk priorities and identifying criteria: while the statute provides for solutions that achieve the coequal goals, are some goals "more equal" than others? Are water supply and the economy "more equal" than environmental goals, for example?
  - Assume the state's resources are limited when considering these risks.
  - The state should sustain the levees, period. They're all equally deserving of attention. If you ignore one levee, you jeopardize the adjacent levees and areas protected by them.
  - Under the current program there is a minimum level of design: Hazard Mitigation Plan [HMP]. The state was told that unless they were able to assist levees getting to this level, the federal government would not assist in emergency response. There's been an emphasis in bringing levees up to HMP standards.

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<sup>1</sup> The same comment regarding what can practically be accomplished in a relatively short time was raised in connection with other risk categories, namely preparedness and land use.

- Levees that protect people and other assets need a higher level of protection than HMP. Those of us working on this issue have focused on levees that we are more confident the federal government will help us with.
    - Optimizing federal assistance is a goal we've focused on. There is a local cost share, and that helps enhance local protection.
  - Get all non-project levees to the HMP standard to maximize assistance from FEMA in the event of a Delta disaster. While there has been progress, the HMP design standard has not yet been reached for all Delta islands; this creates a significant potential financial risk for the State and reclamation districts in the event FEMA denies federal assistance in a future disaster. One estimate is that HMP could be achieved for a cost of \$50 million.
  - Water supply is an important economic driver. In a catastrophic event having a water supply pathway is very important and we recommend this pathway as a priority. A discussion is underway about how such a pathway might be funded.
  - Don't focus on large-scale hypothetical risks (what might happen), focus on smaller scale, higher probability risks that we've already experienced (what likely will happen). Additionally, consider how other waterways beyond the Delta will respond in such cases.
  - Addressing critical infrastructure first makes sense regardless of the current level of protection. It is hard to face decisions where everyone's wishes aren't addressed, and difficult to effectively leave some levees out.
  - Prioritize by the levees that would have the most impacts on human health and safety.
  - We need to look at this—levee risk in the Delta—as part of the larger Central Valley system.
  - Focus on a low-hanging fruit approach—what can be accomplished with relatively little cost in a reasonably short period of time?
  - The Council should view any criteria as interim, there is no endpoint. All levees should improve on a continuous basis. Only prioritize, based on funding, which ones should be worked on first. Everything should be looked at with the goal of bringing it to a higher level.
  - \$50 million is needed to get all the levees to the HMP level so they are eligible for FEMA funding.
  - There are different views about the cost to achieve the higher PL 84-99 design standard. One estimate is approximately \$1 billion; another is lower.
  - Some risks are infeasible to significantly reduce.
  - You need a matrix from a broad perspective to identify all these reasons and risks. There need to be some objective criteria.
3. *What are the most effective ways to address the priority levees, given the state's restricted resources? (including but not limited to levee operation, maintenance, and improvements)*
- I'm here under the assumption that the state will not be funding all the work in the Delta. Maybe we need to identify a beneficiary-pays approach to cost sharing? The State is not able to take on all the Delta's burdens.
  - The state will always struggle with funding and resources.

- There is always local cost share for levee improvements, but in some areas there may be other means of cost sharing.
- Take the best practices and utilize funds as best we can considering the economic constraints.
- Look for ways to generate revenue. This is a perfect time to be creative and look for ways to link up diverse funding streams.
- Develop programmatic approaches that could streamline steps for projects getting approved.
- How can we capture federal money? It's important to get to that PL 84-99 level. Anytime we can tag onto a grant to get something studied or done that would be very strategic.
- One significant problem the Council should be aware of is that there is not a full understanding of how the levee "system" works. A second information problem pertains to gathering all data about the Delta. Researchers find that they cannot have confidence that they are aware of all important data sets or other information.
- It doesn't seem like there's a good way to capture all the data that is available about the Delta to improve understanding about risks. Maybe there should be some funding and effort to capture it all in one place and put it online.

*Themes and Points of Emphasis at this meeting:*

- ✓ There are concerns about how the Council will set risk reduction priorities while following its co-equal goals mandate. During the meeting this concern was articulated by some participants as "some goals being more equal than others."
- ✓ The Delta must be addressed as an entire system rather than as a set of individual levees or islands. At this time there is not a complete understanding about how improvements to one levee may affect other levees. In addition, the Delta must be addressed in the broader context of flood management, including consideration of other regions and water sources.
- ✓ It is important to fully grasp the scope, activities, and accomplishments of existing programs and build on these, rather than establishing new programs.
- ✓ The Council should make it a priority to maximize the State's ability to access federal funding. This includes ensuring that federal funds will be available in the event of a federally declared disaster. Improving all Delta levees to the HMP level is one step estimated to cost \$50 million.
- ✓ A water supply pathway is under development and should be considered as a priority. The funding for such a pathway is under discussion.
- ✓ In light of anticipated State funding constraints a basic principle of beneficiary-pays should be considered. There is a local cost-share component for current levee programs.
- ✓ Looking for "low hanging fruit" that could be addressed reasonably quickly and with limited costs is one possible criterion.
- ✓ It is important to clarify how timeframes associated with risk reduction, e.g., 10 years as the short-term, fit with timeframes for Council action on the Interim Plan and Delta Plan.

## Category 2: Preparedness

4. *What types of flood-related emergency planning activities should be conducted in the Delta and how should they be prioritized?*
  - There are two components involving different players and agencies:
    - *Flood fight*: reduce extent and duration of flood. Flood fight is a prime directive. An effective flood fight prevents the other operations from being necessary or makes them easier to carry out.
    - Evacuation, shelter, recovery, etc.
  - The concepts for regional coordination and preparedness are there, but the state needs to be better at approving these actions and allowing districts to take action.
  - We need a regional plan.
  - The Council should educate themselves on what's there; they need to empower people to make decisions and act at a local level.
  - Help the districts work together, not separately.
  - We should have a decentralized system where things are done at the local, lowest level. This is not currently the case. The local responders do not have the resources to act quickly. Create an emergency loan fund in each district in case of emergency. That takes the burden off the state and federal government because they can focus on bigger issues.
  - Prepare maps and identify the information we need to make flood fight decisions. This can all be planned in advance.
  - Reach out to local people who have probably developed their own preparedness plans already, they have the local knowledge.
5. *What immediate actions should be taken for high-risk areas?*
  - Put \$50 million borrowing capability in place for the local districts, guaranteeing loans so they can act if there's a flood tomorrow.
  - Inventory existing plans to create a starting point.
  - Emergency plans for the Delta are not the only ones that are pertinent. Caltrans and other agencies are tied to the Delta and they will have emergency plans. There may be conflicts there as well.
  - For water supply, we could use a real-time model for flood emergencies, a hydrodynamic model at the time of the event to track salinity and be able to act accordingly.
6. *What agency coordination would best achieve effective emergency planning and implementation?*
  - The Department of Water Resources (DWR) and Office of Emergency Services (OES) have emergency response departments, but neither are here today.

### *Themes and Points of Emphasis at this meeting:*

- ✓ While there is local preparedness planning there needs to be a regional approach that is not currently in place.
- ✓ Local responders need access to loans in an emergency to ensure their ability to implement plans.

- ✓ There is presently a lack of integration and coordination between local and State preparedness planning. The Council should take steps to improve this interaction.

### **Category 3: Land Use**

7. *Are additional local/regional land use regulations needed to provide adequate levels of protection to people, structures, and ecosystems?*
  - Common sense is ignored in planning and land use because of political pressure. It drives unrealistic decisions. You need an agency that understands these impacts that is outside of this to overlook it. Local jurisdictions don't want to give up authority, but this might be valuable.
  - Planning needs to be regional and done without local political pressure. Even if a levee meets standards, the area behind it should not be removed from the floodplain. Maybe that's something the Council could help with in terms of insurance.
  - Communities are not designed to have a Plan B from the beginning if urban levees fail. There needs to be some room for "common sense thinking" when designing communities.
  - Planning needs to incorporate what effects may also be occurring on other water sources, i.e., treat as a system. Do not assume other sources are static.
  - We cannot abandon the Delta because it is at risk. We need to be able to react to hazards and get back to normal as fast as possible.
  - The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers is at odds with itself sometimes, and with FEMA as well. The Council needs to look at these conflicts.
  - What is the risk? We haven't really figured out other responsibilities for shoring up risk (state and federal responsibilities). We need to better understand what the risks are, including environmental risks.
  - Is the Council creating a plan, or more giving input and advice on other plans? The most the Council can hope to do is inject some energy and get some action moving on existing plans. They could pull disparate efforts together and get people to move in a more coordinated fashion.
  - It would be good for the Council to read the CVFPP's Delta regional summary document.
8. *What local/regional land use incentives might enhance protection from floods?*
  - Parks that are future breach zones. Areas that are designed to flood should be designated.
  - Accommodate future levee improvements, if people didn't live right up against the levees. Easements for such improvements are one example.
  - Maybe inventory what incentives exist already, and fully understand what those incentives look like.
  - There should be roles for accountability and responsibility.
  - There is some local accountability and there have been some consequences.
  - Create corridors for flood planning, for environmental purposes and water supply. This creates incentives for the funding that it might take to shore up the Delta's goals. Look at all aspects of the planning and create value. There's a need

for greater, broader decision making for potential to create value and mutual benefits.

- You still have to allow infrastructure and building to continue or the economy will not be supported. You need some flexibility at least in the non-urban areas.

*Themes and Points of Emphasis at this meeting:*

- ✓ The Council should consider options to reduce, but not eliminate, the influence of local politics on local land use decisions in order to reduce future risk. The history of local decision making often reflects choices that lack “common sense” and limit opportunities to reduce risks to people, infrastructure, and the environment. One possibility would be to establish a component of regional decision making.
- ✓ The Council should fully educate itself about ongoing programs, including the CVFPP.

### **III. Next Steps**

Information about future work group meetings, meeting materials and this meeting summary will be available on the Council website: [www.deltacouncil.ca.gov](http://www.deltacouncil.ca.gov).



***Appendix A: Delta Stewardship Council Risk Reduction and Coequal Goals Work Group Meeting Agenda***

**July 7, 2010  
-- MEETING AGENDA --  
Meeting of the RISK REDUCTION AND COEQUAL GOALS WORK GROUP**

**Thursday, July 8, 2010**

**Delta Room  
650 Capitol Mall, Fifth Floor  
Sacramento, CA 95814**

**THE AGENDA ITEMS LISTED BELOW MAY BE CONSIDERED IN A DIFFERENT ORDER.**

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- 9:00 a.m. 1. Welcome and Greetings, Agenda Review**
- 2. Review Purpose, Charge, and Format for Meeting**
- 3. Organize Meeting Charge Categories and Priorities**
- 4. Gather Input for Council**
- 5. Discuss Next Steps for Work Group**
- July Council Meeting**
  - Future Work Group meetings**
- 6. Evaluate Initial Work Group Meeting**
- 7. Action Item Review, Meeting Recap**

**12:00 p.m. Adjourn**

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- Additional information can be found on the Delta Stewardship Council's website at <http://www.deltacouncil.ca.gov>
  - If you have questions or need reasonable accommodation due to a disability, please contact Debbie Minnifield, Delta Stewardship Council (916) 445-5511, or TDD (800) 735-2929.

## **Appendix B: Delta Stewardship Council Risk Reduction and Coequal Goals Work Group Meeting Charge and Materials**

### **Charge:**

The Risk Reduction and Coequal Goals Workgroup will generate input for the Delta Plan that will support state policy and Delta Plan objectives to:

“Reduce risks to people, property, and state interests in the delta by effective emergency preparedness, appropriate land uses, and investments in flood protection [Water Code Sections 85020(g) and 85305]

Further the coequal goals of providing a more reliable water supply for California and protecting, restoring, and enhancing the Delta ecosystem. The coequal goals shall be achieved in a manner that protects and enhances the unique cultural, recreational, natural resource, and agricultural values of the Delta as an evolving place. [Water Code Sections 85020 and 85300]

To provide timely input for the Interim Plan, especially given the requirements of the above Water Code sections, the first meeting of the Risk Reduction and Coequal Goals Workgroup will focus on reducing risks. At this session, the workgroup will review materials identified below that were included in the meeting packet for the June 24-25, 2010 Delta Stewardship Council meeting to answer the following questions focused on providing input to the Interim Plan:

- 1. What and where are the most significant short-term and medium-term levee risks in the Delta?*
- 2. How should the state prioritize these risks?*
- 3. What are the most effective ways to address the priority levees, given the state’s restricted resources? (including but not limited to levee operation, maintenance, and improvements)*
- 4. What types of flood-related emergency planning activities should be conducted in the Delta and how should they be prioritized?*
- 5. What immediate actions should be taken for high-risk areas?*
- 6. What agency coordination would best achieve effective emergency planning and implementation?*
- 7. Are additional local/regional land use regulations needed to provide adequate levels of protection to people, structures, and ecosystems?*
- 8. What local/regional land use incentives might enhance protection from floods?*

### **Materials:**

The following materials contained in the meeting packet for the June 24-25, 2010 Council meeting provide important background:

First Draft Interim Plan, pp. 7-9  
First Draft Interim Plan, pp. A25-A27  
Appendix II to the First Draft Interim Plan  
Appendix III to the First Draft Interim Plan  
Appendix V to the First Draft Interim Plan  
Appendix VI to the First Draft Interim Plan  
See also: California Water Code Section 12994.5